

CCC INTERVIEW WITH DALE HALL

Date: May 21, 2002

Location: Des Moines, Iowa

Interviewer: Larry Wilson

DNR: Where was your hometown, Dale?

Dale: Des Moines, Iowa.

DNR: How old were you when you enrolled?

Dale: I was 16 and just out of high school. It was a depression and there was no work. They took us into the CCC according to need.

DNR: So you enrolled in the CCC to earn some money?

Dale: I made \$1 a day. My father was a coal miner. When spring came on he had no work.

DNR: What camps were you in?

Dale: Guthrie, (now Springbrook State Park) then transferred to Oakland, Iowa to finish my term.

DNR: Did they close the camp and move you then?

They closed the camp and moved us to five different camps.

DNR: When did you enroll and how long were you in?

Dale: 1940, I was there over a year. A year and a half. The last three months I was in Oakland, Iowa. We built terraces and farm ponds and made fence for farmers. The labor was free, they bought the materials.

DNR: How did you get from Des Moines to Guthrie?

Dale: On Army trucks. The headquarters for the 3C camp was in Fort Des Moines. All the vehicles were there. The administrative part was run by the Army. A major was in charge of the post. We had two officers in charge of us.

DNR: What did they issue to you at Guthrie?

Dale: We had barracks. The kitchen was right across from my barracks. We received some toiletries. We got a duffel bag and a footlocker. I still have my footlocker.

DNR: Did you take any personal items when you went there?

Dale: No.

DNR: Were there any items you couldn't bring?

Dale: Just the clothes on your back. Then we had to send those home.

DNR: How were you assigned a place to stay?

Dale: Wooden barracks with two stoves to the barracks about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way in and another one about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way in.

DNR: Who supplied the bedding?

Dale: It was all government issue.

DNR: How did you get your barracks assignment?

Dale: They would line us up and just assign them.

DNR: Do you remember any of your bunkmates?

Dale: Just one, Hogchow.

DNR: Did you guys get along?

Dale: Yes. If you didn't follow orders, they gave you your walking papers.

DNR: How was the food?

Dale: Just as good as the Army.

DNR: Who did the cooking?

Dale: We had KP. CCC boys. The food was very good. It was better than what I was getting at home.

DNR: How much were you paid?

Dale: \$30. \$25 went home and \$5 we could keep.

DNR: When was payday?

Dale: First of the month. You lined up in a line to see the paymaster. They paid us \$5.

DNR: What days off did you have?

Dale: Weekends. You could go home once a month.

DNR: How did you spend your \$5?

Dale: Canteen in camp. We went to the theatre.

DNR: Was the Sabbath observed?

Dale: We had a chaplain on the base.

DNR: Were there sports teams?

Dale: I played on the baseball team. That was it. We had a rec hall.

DNR: Were there any personal conflicts?

Dale: No, not really. If someone was hot we would put them in the boxing ring and see how hot they were. I don't know of any bullies we had. The CCC camp was as rigid as the Army. Discipline. You messed up, discipline, and there was the door.

DNR: How did problems get resolved if there were fights among the men?

Dale: The company commander was the boss. He resolved it. The discipline was pretty rigid. People were there for the money.

DNR: Were there educational and vocational training opportunities?

Dale: No.

DNR: At Springbrook, what did you do?

Dale: First job I had was digging a ditch, all by hand. After I was there a while, I applied for a truck driving job and became a truck driver. The boss took a liking to me and taught me how to drive a bulldozer. As you go into the park from the road, there is a sign with the name of the park, a forked road appears to the right of the road that goes to the caretaker's residence. If you kept going up the hill, to the top of the hill is where we built cabins on the south side of the lake. We built that road from scratch in 1940. At Oakland, Iowa, I was a bulldozer operator there, building ponds and terraces. Mr. McGee showed me how to use a bulldozer. He's the only one I can remember.

DNR: Did you get along with the workers?

Dale: Yes.

DNR: How did you get your daily work assignments?

Dale: Our foreman. The State of Iowa, park service. I think we had four foremen. I was involved in building the septic tank along the road there.

DNR: Did you know of any of your co-workers?

Dale: No, I can't remember.

DNR: Have you kept in touch with any of the other guys?

Dale: No.

DNR: Did the country boys get along with the city boys?

Dale: Yes. Get along or get out.

DNR: Were there any minorities in the camp?

Dale: They had their own camp.

DNR: What were the specific skills you learned?

Dale: Truck driving and bulldozer training.

DNR: Did these skills benefit you once you left?

Dale: I used the bulldozer, and an inloader.

DNR: Were there any injuries at work?

Dale: I don't remember.

DNR: Was there a doctor on the camp?

Dale: Yes.

DNR: Were there diseases in camp?

Dale: No.

DNR: Was there a rodent or insect problem in the camp?

Dale: No.

DNR: Did you do any work outside the camp, for others or the community?

Dale: No.

DNR: Did you have contacts with the outside community?

Dale: No. On the weekends I trucked the guys in to town for the movie.

DNR: Were there Masonic or similar organizations around?

Dale: No.

DNR: Did you have contact with females?

Dale: No way.

DNR: Were the local boys okay with the camp boys?

Dale: Yes.

DNR: Did the community like the camp?

Dale: Yes.

DNR: What was your most memorable experience in the CCC?

Dale: I can't remember any.

DNR: Were there any odd experiences?

Dale: None.

DNR: What was your biggest accomplishment in the CCC?

Dale: Learning discipline and learning a trade.

DNR: How was your life changed in the CCC's?

Dale: Well, you learned to be an adult real quick.

DNR: What did you do after the CCC's?

Dale: I went to work for the Fitch Company for fifty cents an hour. They made shampoo and hair oils and products like that. I got married in 1942. We've been married 60 years. I went into the service December 1, 1942, with one child on the way. Uncle Sam said we need you. I was in three years and nineteen days. I lost my son. He was misdiagnosed in the hospital. He had rabies. They couldn't find marks. They had four doctors. He was six years old. His birthday was May 13. He died on June 26. After the Army, I drove for Central Service, in March of '46 for 5 years. Our company sold out to Phillips. Phillips looked down on us because we were union. I opened my own Continental Oil Company (Conoco) service station. I ran it until 1999. I did it 48 years. The Department of Natural Resources ran me out of business with the enforcement rules regarding underground tanks. It cost me big bucks. Money I was never able to recoup.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION – Sam J. Haim – Scribe

Updated August 19, 2005 by Larry Wilson after reviewing with Dale Hall.